

Some observations

Pap 2 March 18th
1826

on
Calomel

or

(according to the new Chemical nomenclature)

the

Bichloride of Mercury.

By

John G. Jones

of
Pittsford.

Paper March 18
1876

To John D. Godman M.D.

Whose Splendid talents as a Teacher, and
Kindness to me as a Man,

Compel me, in justice to my own feelings
to express, even here, my admiration
of His exalted Medical attainments,
my profound respect for his private Values,
and my unfeigned gratitude for his friendship

Philadelphia March 8th 1826 J. P. Jones

Mr. J. B. Johnson, N.Y.

Dear Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst.

in relation to the matter of the

contract for the purchase of

the land of the State of New York

and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. B. Johnson

Calomel.

In this article I have been involuntarily led from a
consideration of its great importance as a remedial agent.

The limits which I have prescribed for these
observations, prevent me from entering into an his-
torical account of this article; nor do I think it
necessary to investigate the propriety of the various
appellations, by which, at different periods it has
been known.

It is my intention to speak in a brief manner
of its component parts, its sensible qualities, and its
application to some of the many diseases, which, when
judiciously administered it seems destined to over-
come.

Mercury is susceptible of combination with two
proportions of oxygen. When one proportional of Mercury
and one of oxygen are united they form the black oxide, of
which Calomel is the Muria; or it is the union of one

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The first of the great principles of the human mind is the principle of association. This principle is the foundation of all our knowledge and is the basis of all our reasoning. It is the principle that connects the different parts of our mind and makes them work together. Without this principle, we would be unable to learn or to think. It is the principle that makes the human mind a powerful and flexible instrument.

The second of the great principles of the human mind is the principle of comparison. This principle is the foundation of all our judgment and is the basis of all our decision-making. It is the principle that allows us to compare different things and to see their similarities and differences. Without this principle, we would be unable to make any decisions or to judge anything. It is the principle that makes the human mind a powerful and flexible instrument.

The third of the great principles of the human mind is the principle of abstraction. This principle is the foundation of all our science and is the basis of all our discovery. It is the principle that allows us to abstract the essential qualities of things and to ignore their accidental qualities. Without this principle, we would be unable to discover any laws or to make any progress in science. It is the principle that makes the human mind a powerful and flexible instrument.

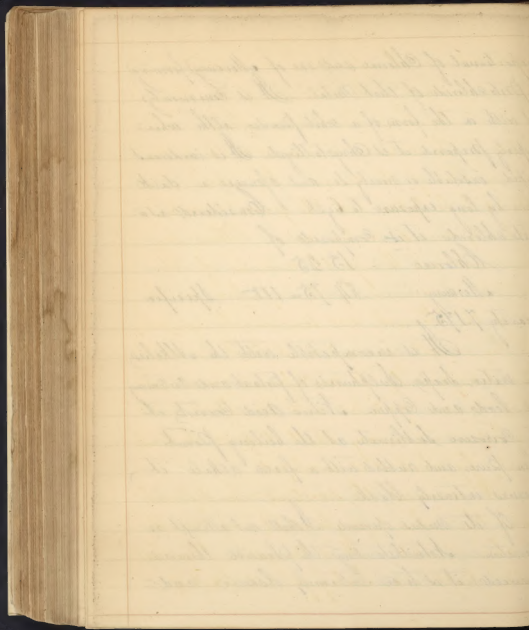
proportional of Chlorine and one of Mercury forming
the 5th chloride of that Metal. It is commonly
met with in the form of a white powder, altho when
properly prepared it is Crystallized. It is inodorous
insipid, insoluble or nearly so, and assumes a dark
Colour by long exposure to light. Considered as a
proto chloride it is composed of

Chlorine . . . 15.25

Mercury . . . 84.75 = 100. Specific
gravity 7.175.

It is incompatible with the Alkalies,
lime water, soaps, Sulphurates of potash and Antimony
iron, lead, and Copper. Nitric Acid converts it
into Corrosive sublimate at the boiling point.
When pure, and rubbed with a fixed alkali it
becomes intensely black.

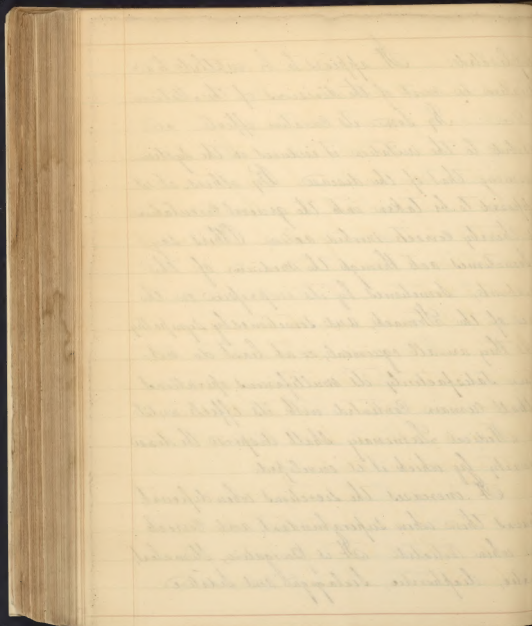
Of its Modus operandi, I shall not attempt an
explanation. Notwithstanding the plausible theories
advanced, it is to me extremely obscure and



Complicated. It appears to be entitled to a
situation in most of the divisions of the Materia
Medica. By some its Curative effects are
ascribed to the irritation it induces in the system
overcoming that of the disease. By others, it is
supposed to be taken into the general Circulation
and thereby corrects morbid action. Others say
it sometimes acts through the medium of the
absorbents, sometimes, by its impression on the
nerves of the Stomach, and sometimes, by Sympathy.

As they are all equivocal, or at least do not
explain Satisfactorily its multifarious operations
I shall remain Contented with its effects until
some Medical Luminary shall disperse the dense
obscurity by which it is enveloped.

It increases the secretions when deficient,
restrains them when superabundant, and corrects
them when vitiated. It is Purgative, Stimulant,
diuretic, diaphoretic, Sialagogue and Sedative.



It is therefore applicable to most of the diseases,
to which Mankind are subject, and in many of them
it is the only Article on which we can rely.

If practitioners of Medicine were left to the selection
of a single remedy, Calomel from its diversified ex-
tensive effects, would certainly merit that high distinction.
It is indeed to use the emphatic language of the
modern professor of Materia Medica and Pharmacy
"in itself a Task."

It does not increase the peristaltic motion
of the intestines by irritation on which account when
used as a purgative it should be accompanied by
some more drastic Article. A small dose is
more active in proportion than a large one. When
used as a purgative, should it fail to operate
in six or twenty Hours, some other Cathartic
should be given to prevent salivation when this is
not desired. This is highly important in Children
when salivation is sometimes attended by

most lamentable consequences. It is well known however, that they bear the operation of Calomel better than adults, and it is frequently when necessary extremely difficult to induce in them its peculiar action.

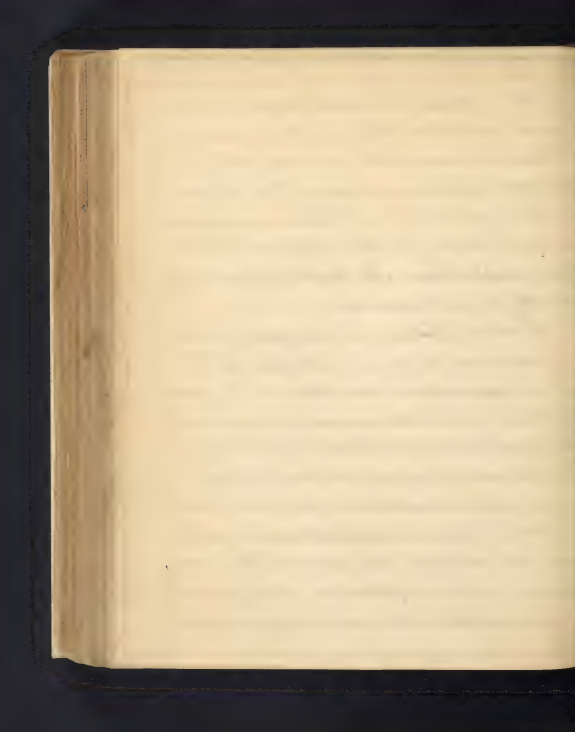
After taking Calomel the patient should avoid cold Water, Cold and damp air, all articles of food and Stimulating drinks. As a Cathartic it is not so speedy in its operations as many others. This may be hastened by uniting with it almost any Purgative medicine. To obtain best benefit from it as an alterant, the Patient should be confined to a regular and mild temperature, use occasionally the warm bath, wear flannel next the skin, and observe a very abstemious regimen.

There are two States of the system which forbid its employment as an alterant. First when the Pulse is full, active, and strong, when there is general plethora, and the obvious prevalence of the



phlogistic diathesis. In such a condition it would be almost impossible to obtain its specific action, and if obtained, it would be that much more irritation superadded to the disease. Secondly it is improper when there is great action in the system and a manifest saliency of Power; such States often occur in the latter stages of Typhus Febris. Nor should it be given during the existence of great organic lesion.

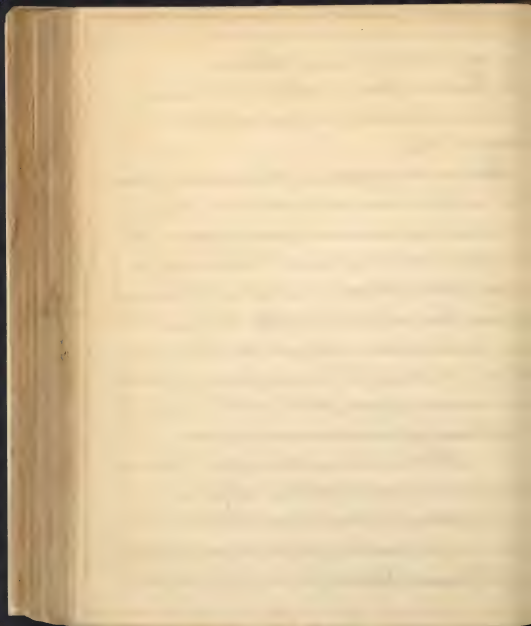
Its alterant effect may be recognized, by redness and laceration of the gums, a peculiar color of the teeth, a brassy or cupreous taste, ulcers on the lips, gums, and insides of the cheeks, increased flow of saliva, fetidulous appetite, augmented secretion of bile, irregular state of the bowels, oppression in the chest, sighing, embarrassed respiration, and when its effects become more considerable the pulse becomes small, weak, quick, variable and intermittent, with general debility and inaction. On some persons one or two grains will suit saturation, while in others several scruples have



been given without producing that effect.
By Kermes, Mercury is said to have remained
inert in the system for years, and then been
started into action.

There are some appearances which occasionally present
themselves after its use. One of which is a vesicular
effluescence which sometimes supervenes upon the
administration of a single dose. There are also in
mercurial patients phagadenic ulcerations on the mucous
surfaces. These should be carefully distinguished
from General ulcers as they not only require a
different treatment, but become exceedingly trouble-
some and even jeopard the life of the patient by
the continuation of any mercurial preparation.

The circumstances which appear to favour
its specific action are bloodletting and purging, if
there be plethora, its combination with antimonials
is often as the peculiarity of the case may indicate.
Slight nausea kept up for twenty four or thirty



in hours will often enable us to obtain its full effect.
Cold applications are important adjuncts in some cases
When the irritability of the system is excessive, we should
begin with it Opium when deficient at first it will
best suit Stimulants. The Strychnine Patients are
said sometimes to succeed, inducing, immediately, a
profuse flow of saliva when all ordinary remedies
are failed.

The dose of Calomel as an alterant may be
varied from one fourth to two grains, repeated as
the urgency of the case may demand; as a
purgative from five to twenty grains, most
commonly from ten to fifteen are given.

I know of no remedy capable of cutting short
its effects. Where it is desirable to eradicate the em-
pysem from the system, different articles should
be employed according as the circumstances of the
case may require. Opium, Sarsaparilla, Cicuta, Mele-
oid, Ictenionial preparations and many others may



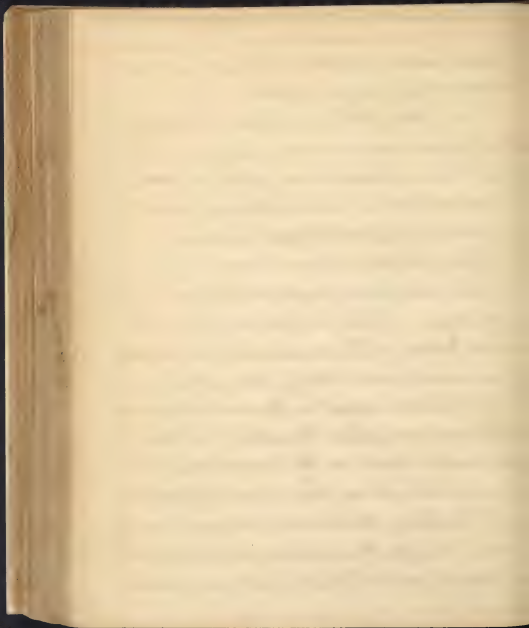
be found useful, yet they all require time and the observance of a proper Regimen.

Among the many articles which have at different periods been announced as specific in the Venereal disease, Salomel is one of the few which have gained additional trust by passing through the ordeal of long and diversified experience.

I believe it amply competent to eradicate from the system, when properly employed the Venereal taint in every Stage. If late the efforts to subvert the Mercurial practice in this disease have been directed by high authority and certainly claim attention.

Among the number arrayed in opposition to this course stands conspicuously Doct. Carmichael of Dublin.

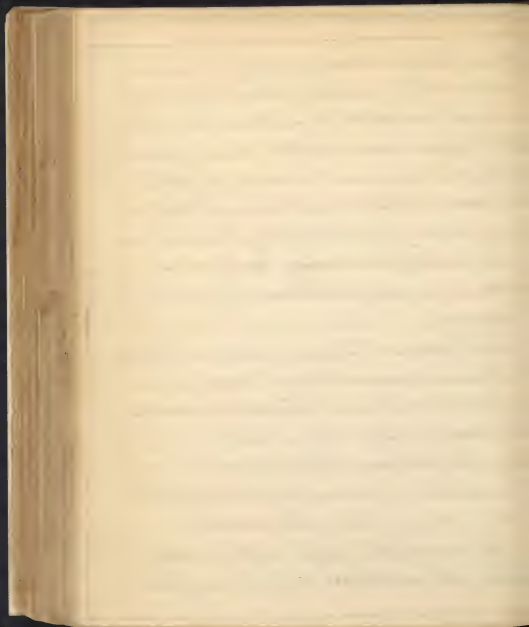
In his excellent treatise on the Venereal disease he informs us that after we have unavailingly employed general bloodletting Antimonials, Astringent washes, Purgatives, Sassaaparilla, quinquina, tar ointment, the Chlor. Muratic acid bath, Liebig's, bread and water



practiced. Ointment of lard mixed with strong
solutions of the peroxide, we may obtain benefit
from Mercury provided the general disease is on 'the
wane.' It appears to me, that after exhausting such
a catalogue Mercury would be exceedingly apt to
find his friend the patient on the wane. If the object
is, as it certainly should, to employ the least pain-
ful and most effectual remedy, surely no one
could hesitate in giving to Calomel the preference
in this disease.

In Hepatitis it stands deservedly at the head
of all Medical resources. Universal experience sanc-
tions its employment, and the brightest ornaments
of the Medical profession testify decidedly to its
efficacy. It often forms the first prescription in
this disease, and not unfrequently averts the fatal
issue when every ray of hope has vanished.

It is manifestly useful in all diseases
connected with or dependant on a depraved state



of the hepatic functions.

It is chiefly resorted to in all Fevers, where Purgatives are indicated; but it is in Bilious Fever that it displays most obviously its superiority.

In Hydrocephalus it is of the first Consideration, and when effusion has taken place it is the only remedy with which we can hope to succeed.

In Cynanche Trachealis it is almost exclusively confided in by some practitioners.

In Colica Pictonum, it forms the basis of our hopes of success.

In paralysis we find it recommended by higher authority as deserving a trial after all other remedies have failed.

In Cholera Morbus Dysentery, Diarrhoea, Epilepsy and very many other diseases, Nature alone or with some of its ordinary Enemata, furnished us with the most hopeful means of restoring health.

It would be no difficult matter to



extend this Catalogue much further; but as I
am on several accounts precluded from entering
minutely into details, I shall here close my remarks
on this Subject, Conscious, that to do it justice re-
quires an abler hand.

In taking my leave of this University
I beg permission to be indulged in offering, my
humble, but sincere acknowledgments, to the distinguished
Professors, for the benefits I have derived from their
invaluable Lectures.

Altho' my lot is cast far hence,
the pleasing recollection of pursuing my studies here,
and the facilities so amply provided to advance
them, will be to me an unfailing source of delightful
recollection.

If from the rich profusion of Medical
knowledge, which has flowed so copiously from the
several departments, I shall have treasured up
principles, which I may in future apply to the

alleviation of suffering humanity, then shall I have
attained the primary object of my most ardent desires.
How should I be proud of being recognized a worthy
son of the University of Pennsylvania.

Philadelphia March 8th 1826.

John F. Groves

H. C. C.